

APPENDIX D

Minutes for Blaine-County-Wide Fire Officials' Code Meeting - Held February 3, 2004 -

MINUTES FOR BLAINE-COUNTY-WIDE FIRE OFFICIALS' CODE MEETING
- Held February 3, 2004 in the 3rd floor meeting room of the Old County Courthouse -

Meeting Purposes:

- ❖ Consistent Codes
- ❖ Evaluation of Fire Jurisdiction Needs
- ❖ Specifically Code Development Today
- ❖ Fire Prevention (Not Suppression) Emphasis
- ❖ Continue Communities At Risk Effort
- ❖ Look at Codes Relative to Suppression Capability - e.g. Bridges, access, defensible space, fuel loading.
- ❖ Infrastructure Needed to Actually Implement Code
- ❖ Get on the Same Page with Wildland/Urban Interface Code Establishment

Other Follow-up Purposes Related to Meeting:

- ❖ Consider Firewise Recommendations
- ❖ Download Newest Code From Bill Dyer's County Web Site

Available Codes:

Regarding **Water 402.2.2** – Chief Bart Lassman recommends a review of fire flows (*water supplies*) for both city and county areas based on square footage.– The flows *do* need to be *increased* despite the type of standard chosen.

Bill Dyer brought our attention to **Appendix B-104** – increase/decrease – and **105.1 Table: square footage** as two written resources with techniques to reconsider.

Mike Chapman spoke of **Appendix 1C** – attach amendment to ordinance about the **#10-maximum-value** for homes or sites with not enough water or inadequate water supply. The #10 value would yield a decision of “You don’t build” or size restriction as the alternative. Plus: Defensible Space and non-combustible materials also need to be considered.

Tom Johnson mentioned *rural areas – difficult to get fire flows*, three-phase power issues or no source, there may be a need to change tactics in these remote or less developed areas from offensive to defensive.

Mike Elle and Mike Chapman suggested and discussed that points should be added for enlarged *home additions* – handling additions is an area that needs adjustments.

Bart Lassman raised the topic of *Cisterns* while *Mike Elle* spoke about other types of *water systems*.

Regarding water supply, the *group* thought that perhaps there needs to be an entire fire officials' *workshop just on fire flows*.

Mike Elle also discussed the need for an adequate model for effectively restricting fireworks through city ordinances as well as a detailed countywide *fireworks ordinance*.

Mike Elle also reminded all that we need to address a *minimum height for address number markers* for seasonal consideration when markers get buried by snow.

Tom Johnson suggested we all look at one of the Appendices for characteristics of components of a *better defined clear space* as well as a *plant list* for fire resistive plants.

Greg Schwab said a plant list is needed to *provide examples of plants for wildfire safety that also live at 6,000 feet* and could be planted for better defined clear zones.

Access: 20 feet plus turn-around with one-way roads; also includes back-up power for wells and distances to water.

Group agreement that an increase in fire flows is needed for larger sized homes.

Mike Elle brought our attention to **Appendix D – Access – Section 105** to discuss *increase sizes of access roads* in general to 26' and the resistance to this width. Problem: Height of building over 30 feet yields 26' wide road instead of 20' wide. Other access problems arise from *changing widths* of or along the same stretch of road. Another access concern Mike discussed was related to *aerial apparatus* – e.g. overhead lines or wires along roadway that could interfere with the operations of a fire truck, particularly a ladder truck.

Bart Lassman spoke about adoption of Blaine County **Code 02-04** and how it has become more restrictive. However the Blaine County Board of Commissioners wants width reduced from *26 feet to 20 feet* even when aerial apparatus is involved.

Mike Chapman spoke about the City of Hailey consideration that if there are more than 5 houses in a cluster of housing the street would become a public street and that the city is possibly considering over 2 houses in *a cluster requiring a public street*.

Bruce Smith stated that for surveyors there is a *change in plat* consideration *at 5 or more homes*.

Bart Lassman pointed out that the access issues roll into water access issues. If there is *no water or access then* there is a *need for a sprinkler system*.

Mike Chapman asked: should home buildings in the interface be constructed *over 30 feet* in height anyway?

Jeff Nevins asked that the group consider the option of accepting the **Wildland Urban Interface Code** as minimum requirements amongst fire officials despite the political battle that may ensue.

Jeff Nevins and Mike Chapman spoke about the need for county consistency – *One encompassing Blaine County Fire Code*.

Jeff Nevins also spoke of the need to look at specifics beyond existing recommended code minimums like *distance to forest edges*. **Bill Dyer** added the example of *distances to propane tanks*.

Greg Schwab suggested: *Let's get a wish list* or shopping list going and see what we can sell to the communities.

Bruce Smith spoke about tracking variations in standards and codes based on *creating a fire overlay district*, which would display mapped areas of varying levels of risk.

Mike Chapman asked that we also *associate an evaluation check list with the fuel types* attached as an overlay.

Mike Chapman and Bart Lassman went on to discuss *ideal mapped features* such as fuels, topography, fixed water sources and how *boundaries of fire districts should be ignored* when visually overlaying, comparing and analyzing these features together. *If your home is found to be in a high hazard zone based on feature mapping and analysis then your home receives higher points.*

Tom Johnson drew our attention to *page 22 & 23 of the International Wildland/Urban Interface Code* regarding a recommended format for a Hazards Severity Assessment and asked if the group would consider recommendation of this or another format.

Tom Johnson also asked: Is the group supportive of *adopting a more restrictive code* and working to get it passed through all associated legislatures?

Bill Dyer stated that items like one-hour construction on exteriors is already readily available. He also reminded us that somehow *point systems need to be equitable.*

Mike Chapman *prefers quantifiable methods for devising a point system.*

Greg Schwab talked about the zoning definition referring to floor space which is easier to enforce than a checklist which is easier to cheat on too. Basically there is *not enough staffing to check and to regulate* via more complex check list systems.

Mike Chapman said it can also be a maintenance nightmare to *review every two years* – developers and subdivision organizations can be required by fire chiefs or fire marshals to review and revise their standards every two years

Greg Schwab said *Appendix D* should be reviewed with landscape architects for better compliance.

Jeff Nevins suggested we make any new ordinance reflect *proximity to forested or high risk fuel areas.* We may have the burden of enforcement but at least put the ratings component into an ordinance. *Location is just as important for rating a home* as roof materials and other tangible factors we currently use to evaluate homes.

Mike Chapman added that an *unbroken fuel source* or no change or distinction in fuel type perhaps should indicate a Wildland/Urban Interface Zone.

Jeff Nevins asked that we consider *size of roof: exposure versus square footage of structure.*

Tom Johnson asked: How do we justify a Code adoption - even if we do have a methodology - without developing a *hazards assessment first?*

Mike Chapman said he thought that – *Statewide - it is a minimum requirement to adopt the 2003 International Code* – he said we need to check on this.

Bill Dyer said that we would implement a *point scale* actually at the planning and zoning level of review. And that the *combination of square footage and is definitely an issue!*

Tom Johnson asked: What about the effect of reducing the *fire area?*

Greg Schwab listed “*The Big 3*”: 1) Cisterns, 2) Sprinklers, 3) Fire Walls/Separation.

Bill Dyer suggested that with a *review system* we be sure to put all the required items in *complimentary order*.

Tom Johnson spoke about *Class 'A' Roofs*: Materials & Ratings need to be agreed upon.

Jeff Nevins asked: Would financial incentives in a fee structure work for a permit? Could we create *sliding scale incentives*?

Mike Chapman said a *vegetation and topography overlay study* needed to be accomplished no matter what even if it is not directly tied to code.

Bart Lassman recapped that the two main *priorities* of the Bureau of Land Management were Fuels Analysis and Fire Prevention Education.

Mike Chapman said as an example of the need for continuing education that some Codes, Covenants and Restrictions in the valley *still require wood shake roofs*.

Bill Dyer sees lots of asphalt and metal *roofs* as the current trend in the county and is seeing shingles less and less.

Tom Johnson said that the *fuel model*, the planning team believes, will support adoption of more restrictive codes.

Mike Chapman thought we could *use a point accumulation system as a positive incentives format*.

Bart Lassman and Tom Johnson talked about placing a *focus on high hazards zones* and *giving a discount* for people to do the right thing rather than imposing an impact fee.

Tom Johnson also asked: *Is it O.K. to move forward on evaluating Wildland/Urban Interface Code toward adoption?*

Mike Chapman responded: *Yes, I agree, but what about Colorado's adopted Code?* We may need to devise and adopt *additional impact fees* to enforce the W/U Interface Code.

Greg Schwab said the *Colorado model* is more intensive because it *requires annual inspection* – so we would need a fee for more bodies to actually regulate. He does not want to sign-on to an agreement upon which he cannot deliver.

Obstacles to a Higher Standard of Code Compliance:

Greg Schwab: Our ordinances do not have the teeth that those other exemplary ordinances have – e.g. fees and liens.

Our Direction:

- ❖ Review the Fire Act and look into Fire Grants for the West Magic Area.
- ❖ Review of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fuel models and methodology by the planning team.
- ❖ Planning team will acquire copies of the newest Wildland/Urban Interface fire code for distribution to all countywide fire officials.
- ❖ Get a draft of what code section of plans should cover for group review and consensus.
- ❖ Avoid adoption of code with changes in each district = still five separate plans.
- ❖ Everyone will review Wildland/Urban Interface fire code prior to next fire officials workshop.

- ❖ Communities At Risk Plan versus Ordinances – plan says we will write an ordinance or ordinances as part of mitigation.
- ❖ Confirm State of Idaho adoption of 2003 International Code.
- ❖ Ten Year Fire History needs to be collected for all areas countywide.
- ❖ Work with BLM to update fuel types and to keep in place their visitation program to individual homes that provides handouts, an annual verification survey and education.
- ❖ Avoid profit motivated target groups.
- ❖ No Building Contractors' Association Planning Workshop.
- ❖ Consider the idea of a Class versus a Workshop.
- ❖ Plan for Firewise Classes or Workshops for *teaching* Firewise techniques.
- ❖ Focus on Architects and on Homeowners Associations.
- ❖ Primary intent of planning workshops should be *awareness* and *information*.
- ❖ Utilize public meetings [workshops] as progress reporting opportunities but not as a forum for getting into the specifics of the text and content and editing of the plans.